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*The Historians' History of the World. A Comprehensive Narrative of the Rise and Development of Nations as Recorded by over two thousand of the Great Writers of all Ages.* Edited, with the assistance of a distinguished board of advisers and contributors, by HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D. (New York: The Outlook Company; London: The History Association. 1904. Twenty-five volumes.)

THE general plan of *The Historians' History of the World* is undoubtedly familiar to all readers of the AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW. It was certainly a novel idea to attempt to construct continuous narratives of the development of all the great historical nations by piecing together suitable extracts from contemporaneous and later writers with such editorial introductory and connecting paragraphs as were necessary, and so to produce not only a history of the world but, at the same time, an encyclopedia of historical literature of extraordinary range. The inherent difficulty in the scheme is that any extensive encyclopedia or anthology of historical writing must inevitably contain much that is antiquated as history proper, however interesting to the student of historical literature. In addition to this inherent necessity of incorporating a good deal of material that is not up to date, there is another factor which tends to increase the amount of antiquated material. In the field of English historical writing the copyright enjoyed by works abreast of present scholarship naturally compels a disproportionate selection from authors whose works are no longer copyright and so, from lapse of time, are out of date.

Against these inherent difficulties the editorial staff have contended with various degrees of success. I have examined with more or less care some twenty volumes of the *Historians' History*. In some cases I have been agreeably surprised by the degree to which these difficulties have been surmounted, and in others disappointed to find the difficulties apparently not realized. In the history of Greece (vols. III and IV), for example, one cannot but be favorably impressed by the extent to which the narrative has been derived from writers of the first rank, English or foreign. The matter on Greek colonization, for example, is derived almost entirely from Beloch's work not elsewhere accessible in English. Again, chapter 38, vol. VI, on the civilization of the first two centuries of the Roman empire, is made up of extracts from Renan's *Histoire des Origines du Christianisme*, Merivale's *Romans under the Empire*, Aulus Gellius's *Noctes Atticæ*, Boissier's *L'Opposition sous les Césars*, Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, and Bouché-Leclercq's *Manuel des Institutions Romaines*. The chapter on the Parthian empire (vol. VIII) is mainly derived from Gutschmid's *Geschichte Irans*, and the account of the Sassanids (*ibid.*) is almost wholly from Nöldeke's *Aufsätze zur persischen Geschichte*. On the other hand, in the case of Spain and Portugal (vol. X) works antiquated in matter and never important for style like Busk and Dunham have been extensively drawn upon.

If one turns to the volumes on the United States (XXII-XXIII), one wonders what principle save that of least expense of time and thought suggested going to John Frost for the early life of Columbus or to S. G. Goodrich for his later days. On the other hand, it would be unfair not to point out that Irving's life is extensively used, that Columbus's Sanchez letter is quoted in full and that there are shorter citations from Las Casas and Peter Martyr, and that the editorial foot-notes evince familiarity with the critical literature. The editorial discussion of the Vespucci question, except the last paragraph and perhaps one or two minor statements, is as correct and lucid as it could be made in the space except by a past-master of condensation. The same may be said of the Smith-Pocahontas story.

The general narrative of the story of the English colonies relies largely upon Bancroft and Hildreth. For Massachusetts Barry is the chief modern authority, with several extensive passages from Bradford and the contemporary sources. Perhaps the most serious criticism to be passed upon the treatment of the United States is its gross disproportion. The period from 1814 to 1860 is covered in sixty-four pages, just the number allotted to the years 1770 to 1789, and only ten more than are accorded to the discoveries from 1492 until the death of Columbus. This part, consequently, is on the whole not so good as the average recent text-book and is in fact largely drawn from the old handbooks of Eliot and Lossing.

In general it seems to me that the series appears at its best in the volumes on the ancient orient, Greece, the Roman empire, and perhaps Russia. In these volumes the citations from the best works of modern scholarship in French and German are more numerous and the extracts from English writers of the second or third rank a half-century ago much fewer. The work of translation so far as I tested it in various passages from Kittel's *Geschichte der Hebräer* was well done. Most of the illustrations scattered through the volumes, except the portraits of historians, cannot for the most part but be disappointing to any but the crudest taste.

Two or three other features of the series should be noticed. The so-called bibliographies are extensive author check-lists, alphabetically arranged, of the historical literature relating to the different nations. Brief biographical sketches of the more important writers are interspersed. While the proof-reading of this section leaves much to be desired and while important omissions are not infrequent, the lists as a whole seem to me a very useful feature of the series.

More striking and of incontestable value are the forty-odd special essays contributed in the main by scholars of the first distinction in their respective fields. These men have generally taken these essays seriously, and there are few readers of whatever degree of general attainments who will not be impressed by such papers as Harnack's on "The Roman State and the Early Christian Church" (VI, 629-642), Wilamowitz-Möllendorff's on "The Development of the Hellenic Spirit"

(IV, 587-613), Wellhausen's on "Tribal Life of the Epic Period" in Arab history (VIII, 284-293), Goldziher's on "The Principles of Law in Islam" (*ibid.*, 294-304), or Nöldeke's on "The Scope and Influence of Arabic History" (*ibid.*, 1-24). In addition the history of each nation is summarized in a rather detailed chronological table, and each volume is equipped with one or more maps.

Taken all in all, the series has the unevenness of quality of every historical library, for, in fact, such it is. Reading its volumes will have a certain likeness to a kind of methodical browsing in the alcoves of a vast collection of historical writings with the help of a well-read and, on occasion, critically qualified mentor to guide one's course, supplemented with the additional opportunity of listening now and then to a lecture on the subject from a great modern master. The patron of the smaller public or circulating libraries, and such readers as have not access to large collections of historical works, will be able through the *Historians' History of the World* to sample the work of a wide range of ancient and modern writers. Such readers, too, as have access to large libraries and are fond of discursive historical reading, but yet are without expert guidance, will probably fare on the average quite as well by resorting to the *Historians' History* as they are likely to if they select books on their own initiative. Any one familiar with the relative circulation of various classes of historical works in the larger libraries and the narrow range of historical literature accessible in the smaller popular libraries would not hesitate, I think, after a careful examination of the *Historians' History*, to recognize it, in spite of the shortcomings from the scientific standpoint of much that it contains, as a notable and, in many ways, a very useful effort to extend and broaden popular knowledge of history and of historical literature.

EDWARD G. BOURNE.

*A History of the Ancient World for High Schools and Academies.*

By GEORGE STEPHEN GOODSPEED, Ph.D. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1904. Pp. xvi, 483.)

THIS history of the ancient world adds another to the already noteworthy list of text-books written in recent years by American historians. The proportions of the work, and therefore the relative importance which the author attaches to the main divisions of his subject, may be most effectively described by a simple statement of the number of pages which he assigns to each: oriental history receives sixty-nine, Greece one hundred and seventy, Rome and Europe to the time of Charlemagne two hundred and eight.

The history of the ancient orient, where centuries seem but years, presents a difficult problem for a writer whose narrative must conform in length to the few weeks which the high-school course can allow for its study. The author of the text under review has attacked this problem with unusual success. The essential features of the various